Amiga Random-Monthly gaming magazine!

Issue 5 - Dec 2014 - A Comiga Publication

880 Gamer

TO: Amiga Gamers
FROM: 880 Gamer

Xmas Bonanza!

Double disk dose of Christmas Cheer



'tis the season to be...

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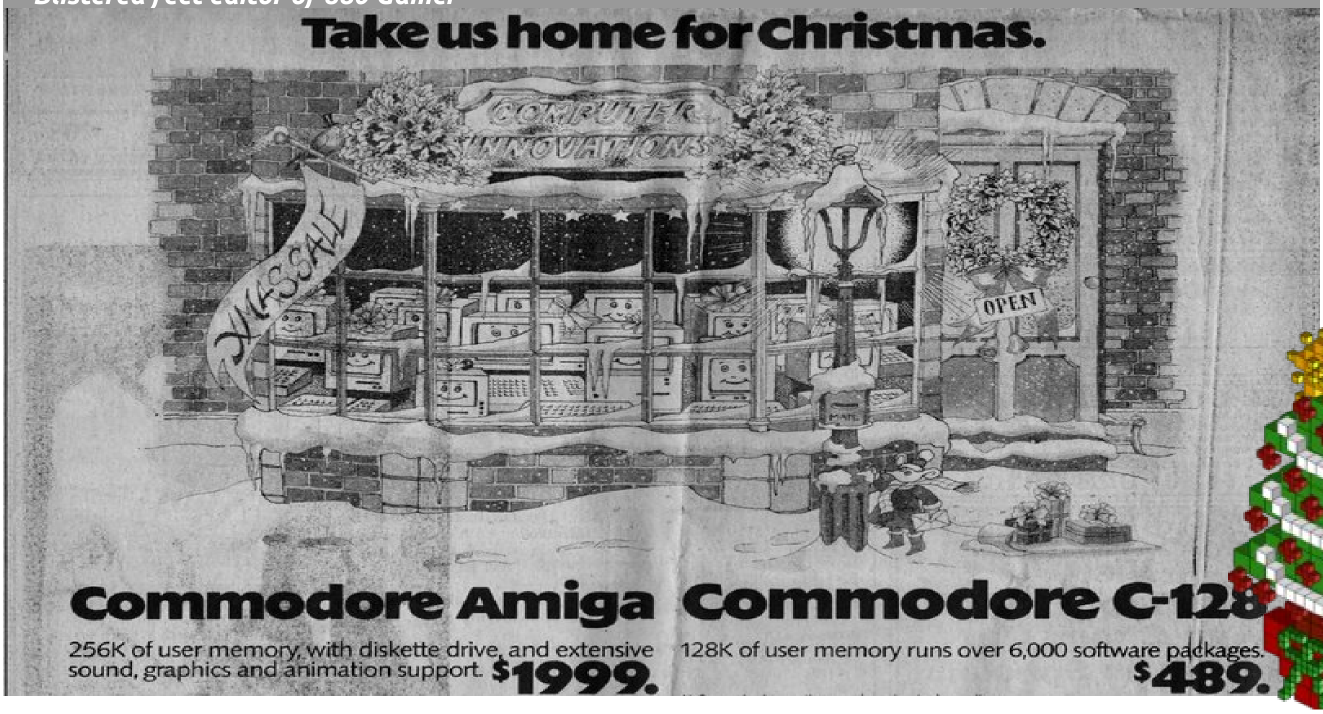
>>start 880

Christmas is a confusing time of the year for me. You see, I have grown up with snow covered Christmas decorations and singing songs about dashing through the snow and a white Christmas, but you see I live in South Australia so its not uncommon to have a 40'c Christmas day. Trust me, the only white stuff here is blistering hot sand at the beach, and you are doing more than dashing across that stuff trying to make it to the cool crisp water to ease the extreme burning of your feet!

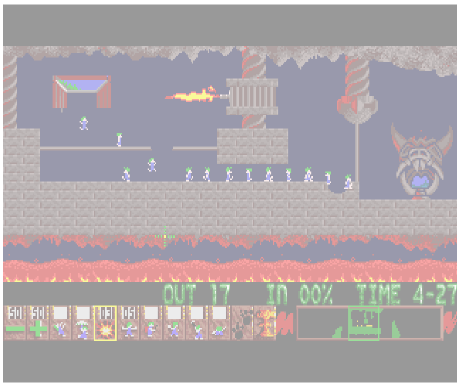
But one thing I probably do share with a lot of you on the upside down part of this crazy world (and those here down under) is the fact that on Christmas day I received my very own Amiga 500! I still don't know how my parents afforded it, I mean have a look at the price below for the original Amiga with a massive 256k of ram! But somehow they did, and it was the best summer ever! Also on this day I got my first copy of CU Amiga, and while that became the choice of magazine for me one little tradition was each year there would be a Amiga magazine in my stocking which I always looked forward to as it would be some random magazine I would normally never get, and being Christmas it would be full of Christmas related stuff along with something cool to play on the day.

So it seems only fitting we here at 880 Gamer have a crack at a Christmas edition complete with Christmas demo disks (that's right, two disks! Its **1760** Gamer this issue!), and we check out what other festive demo disks were released on other magazines during Xmas. You will find a good hearty Christmas feast of games to drool over, and this issue its all about the isometric angle with every game viewed from this cool perspective. The usual bleeding eyes is back to trip your grandparents out on Christmas day (probably best keep away from serious strobe effects!), along with all the other usual drivel! So sit back, roast some chestnuts on an open fire with some hot eggnog while you settle in with your favourite Amiga Games Mag this Christmas (probably because its the only Amiga Gaming magazine this Christmas?). Now, I have to go and fire up the BBQ and throw another shrimp on it.. or something stereotypical like that... and from all of us here at 880 Gamer... **MERRY AMIGA GAMING CHRISTMAS!**

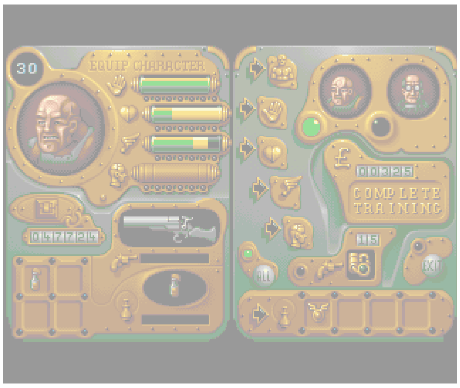
Mark.Stanner.
Blistered feet editor of 880 Gamer



880 contents









880 cover disc

The gift of giving – this issue we give double!

Xmas Lemmings '91



Lets go! Those loveable but slightly suicidal lemmings are back, this time in a whole new adventure just for Christmas! Guide them through these Christmas themed levels while you tap your feet along with the Christmas music. Marvel at how cute they are dressed in their little red Santa suits complete with Christmas hats. Look at how cute they are... right up to the point where they fall to their doom screaming all the way down followed by the gut wrenching squelch as their soft bodies splatter on the hard surface... yep, its jolly Christmas spirited joy for the whole family to enjoy! Have fun!









Retro Asylum Xmas music disk 2014



This issues second piece of Xmas magic was submitted by Aaron White to really get you into the Christmas chip tune spirit! Use F1 to F10 to select any of the awesome Christmas tunes. My fav tunes would have to be Merry Xmas Everybody and Stop the Cavalry which are every chip tuners dream! Check out all the other music disks from Aaron's Retro Asylum's music disk collections at http://awesome.commodore.me/ Just search 'retro' in the Amiga demo section! Enjoy!



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ELECTRONIC ARTS

880 Christmas spirit

Even living on the other side of this big 'ol world of ours, like many of you living in the northern hemisphere we here down under would always look forward to the Christmas editions of our favourite magazines from our upside down friends in the UK. Usually publishers would fall over each other to have their must have smash hit game for the holiday season that would be on every Amiga gamers wish list in the magazine, and sometimes to give their pride and joy even more credentials a custom Christmas edition demo would also be slapped on the front to get Gamers foaming at the mouth and hastily scribbling its name down on there letter to jolly old Santa. In celebration, lets take a moment to have a glance over a few of these festive themed snippets of their full commercial releases... which of course the publishers all hope are sitting under your Christmas tree this year all wrapped up ready to bring joy and wonder to your little beige friend, your Amiga!

Xmas Lemmings

Probably one of the most well known Christmas themed demo's to ever grace any Amiga games magazine, Xmas Lemmings took those already adorable little guys and dressed them all up in little Santa suits, jazzed up the tunes with even cuter Christmas themed songs and then dropped them all into a winter wonderland complete with Christmas pudding houses, Christmas lights and even jolly Santa's swinging (quite violently I must say) on a stick. The only thing missing which is a surprise is some Christmas trees with presents.

Lemmings is a game that redefined puzzle games and one of the all time greats, and so what better excuse to have it also grace our demo disk this issue. In fact, so popular was the Christmas edition it even spawned a yearly tradition with the Holiday Lemmings each year with a collection of new levels for our little red clothed friends to find new ways to kill themselves.

The music gets a little repetitive I have to admit, and after the first couple of very Christmas snow levels you are soon thrust into a very non Christmas world of red bricks and no Christmas references at all... although that now very annoying jolly song is still present and starting to eat away at your brain! As far as Christmas demo's go though, you cant really go past Xmas Lemmings to really get you in the Christmas spirit. I certainly would not complain to find this under my tree this Christmas!







Of all of my favourite screen shots this issue, it all comes down to this middle shot here of lemmings exploding! Satisfying in a violent and very disturbing way.... they are very explosive!

Xmas Rating - 5/5

Fire and Ice - Christmas Special Edition

A lot of games, and indeed platform games especially, already have some sort of snow themed level within the full game, so creating a Christmas theme for one of these games could be as simple as dressing your lead character up in a Santa suit and sticking a fake beard on him. A pretty lazy option, but completely the option chosen for Fire and Ice as presented here in all its festive glory!
Now I have to admit I have not played this game and perhaps there are a lot more changes than I have picked up here, but with the exception of the clothing choice for your character, there seems little else to really get you in the Christmas mood here. Christmas trees? No. Maybe a Christmas themed tune? Not here. Fun and a unique level, but hardy a demo that makes me want to break out the milk and cookies and desperately beg Santa to leave a copy under my tree this year.






Xmas Rating - 2/5

All Terrain Racing – Christmas demo

Finally someone finally thought to get a Christmas tree into their Christmas themed demo! I guess it was not to hard for Team 17 though as the snow themed level in their full game already contained hundreds of pine tree's just begging to have some fairly lights and decorations thrown all over them. But as lease they did not stop there, with neat little touches such as the odd Santa crashed into the roof of a house, and the merry Xmas carved into the snow covered roof of a house.

They even got the music just right with a neat little Christmas themed tune that is a mix of many songs, while not been an actual song (*Lay off the Eggnog, you are making no sense – Ed.*) You could almost say this is the perfect example of a Christmas exclusive demo... or is it as exclusive as you think? You see, the track is in fact one of the same tracks from the full game, and only different with its Christmas tweaks and tunes. Don't get me wrong, this is a fantastic game already and there is enough Christmas cheer to make this very special, it just would have been nice to have an original track that was exclusive to this demo disk.

That said, it did get me *revved up* to play this game again! Get it?? Revved up! A racing game!?! I should really get into the business of making those jokes you get inside Christmas crackers! With jokes like that I would have no problems getting a job in the industry!







Xmas Rating - 4/5

>> BONUS ROUND! - X-Copy Pro (Christmas edition)

Now I know this is not exactly a demo or game to play, but I could not go past this Christmas themed version of X-Copy without mentioning it! If you have ever used an Amiga, there is a good chance you have used X-Copy at some point (to make legal backups of your originals of course...***wink***), and I was totally blown away when looking up these games I stumbled across this special edition. Look at it! It has it all.. snow, presents, a snow man.. no Christmas tree though.. ***sigh***...



Game On!

Its an isometric extravaganza this issue!

Its game review time, so lets get isometric gaming! But first, a few house rules on how we review games here at 880:

- Games are played in emulation and not on real Amiga's. This is to judge a game on its own merits and not the limitations of long load times, never ending disk swaps (I'm looking at you fighting games!) and for all those whiz bang 3D games that were just never going to run even on the most powerful machines (COUGH!... Alien Breed 3D 2 COUGH!)
- The release date will be taken into consideration when reviewing since games advanced in leaps and bounds both graphically and sonically year on year, but if we think it looks crap we are still going to say it!
- If there are multiple versions available (eg. A500 / A1200) then each will be compared based on the single review and differences in scores awarded based on each version.
- All games are played on an evil kitten fuelled PC responsible for the death of the Amiga, although we lessen the evil by using penguin friendly Ubuntu with FS-UAE.
- And what about fabulous prizes I hear you ask? How about...



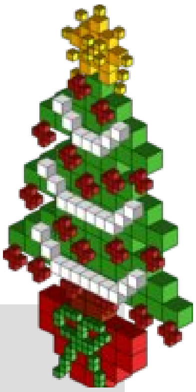
If it's brilliant and scores 90% or higher, then we break out the big gold bars! These can be melted down this issue to make extravagant over the top Christmas gold star for your tree!



If its still a decent play with a score of 80% or higher then it is still worthy of some sterling silver. Like your cheap Xmas decorations, these are made of plastic, silver spray paint and glitter!

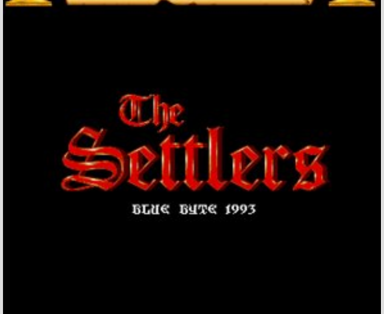
Game On!

This issue is dedicated to isometric wonders!















DESERT STRIKE

ELECTRONIC ARTS - 1993 - A500

Silver

RETURN TO THE GULF

You get the feeling the Gulf War did not really end up achieving a great deal in the end. They never did find those pesky weapons of mass destruction, and with conflict still constantly reaching flash point on a regular basis I cant say it has improved much since. But as with all war's in history it did give game developers some fresh material to work with spawning endless games loosely based on or related to those events, and Desert Strike "Return to the Gulf" is one of them.

After a brief but neat introduction giving you a glimpse of the madman in control of the new terrifying weapons of mass destruction, you drop into the main menu prior to returning to the gulf for one more campaign to rid the world of the new evil. It has to be said the menus are very slick in presentation whisking around and slamming onto the screen locking together complete with chunky sounds to accompany them, and it is here you can select your co-pilot ranging from sloppy winch skills but a keen eye for targeting, to others that are pro on the winch or plain all rounder. While this is an arcade shooter, it is very simulation like in its mission approach with full briefings and primary targets which have to be taken out in specific order in a very large open environment presented in a isometric view. Made up mostly from desert and ocean this can sometimes look a little sparse, but the game looks really good with nicely animated pieces from spinning radar dishes to large explosions lighting the screen up. The real star of the show though is your helicopter which looks amazing as it spins around and dives its nose as you push forward at speed casting a shadow over the landscape below. Littered around you will find MIA soldiers to pick up to return to you beach base along with crates of weapons and barrels of vital fuel.













While you fly in risking your life to save all of humanity, you can be assured your buddies are going to stand around having a beach party and getting a decent tan!


BOOM! Take that you evil spinning radar dish thingy! Nothing can stop me.... oh wait.... is that a big ass enemy gun turret just over there? Retreat! Retreat!



Stop! MAP TIME! Its a map that shows... well... where you are and the enemy! Very handy because it is easy to get lost in this game with its large play area!


And... I am dead! As you can see though I took everyone else with me! Get used to seeing your helicopter in this condition... this is a very tough game!


Row row row your boat, gently down... the gulf of middle east somewhere very secret... shhhhh


The might of the American army, and yet they only thought to pack one barrel of fuel and ammo...


Even with your helicopter raging destruction, no one actually thinks to get into one of these jets to try and stop you... then again, this airport seems to have a traffic jam so maybe they are just stuck

These weapons and fuel are in short supply so you really need to be careful to not blow them up and conserve as much as possible. If anything this is the one gripe I have with the game as it is a very difficult game with extremely long missions, and while you will find some hidden goodies around and your beach base has one of each as well, that is all you will be given and you have to fend for yourself making already difficult game extremely difficult! I am sure your buddies back on the ship you take off from would have more weapons and fuel, and it would have been nice if you could return back for a quick top up when ever needed (and maybe a quick fix while they are at it?!). Because of this completing the first mission is a big challenge in itself!

As we touched on this game looks great through all of the menus and even the loading screens, with a nice sense of progression as you work through each level with changing buildings and even the colours used representing different times of the day. Matching these visuals though is the sounds which are even more and bold and bigger than the on-screen explosions! Your chopper sounds fantastic with a real stereo effect, while on board computer gives you warnings and MIA's call out for help constantly assaulting your ears. During briefings and other non game screens there is some nice music... heck, even the loading screen has its own funky track while you wait! Even before the introduction loads, there is a per-introduction screen with some great radio chatter over moody music giving way to a very cool tune all timed with on-screen credits and imagery.

While Desert Strike may have its origins on the Sega Megadrive, the team responsible for the Amiga version have to be commended on an amazing port which actually improves on nearly every single area of the game both sonically and visually, although this comes with a slight sacrifice to game speed making your helicopter feel a little heavier and not as nimble as other versions... but by golly you will not believe how much better this game looks and sounds compared to other versions! It just goes to show what could be achieved on the Amiga when passionate people are put in control of porting a game! If you have played other versions and liked them, then you should give this version a go as its more like an upgraded directors cut of the game, and if you haven't, you should just play this game anyway! Hard as nails and annoying because of this, but at the end of the day you will have a blast playing this even if you only ever get half way through the first level.

Silver

Desert Strike

A500 - 1993

GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	92%
GAMEPLAY	88%

Brilliant looking, and even better sounding, but ultimately very hard! One of the best arcade chopper games ever released for those looking for a true challenge.

SCORE 88%


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CADAVER

IMAGE WORKS - 1990 - A500

Disclaimer alert! Cadaver is a very big game and while I have played a large section of the game, I will be the first to admit I have not made it all the way through. Its not that I did not want to continue, its simply a case of the WHD file I had was corrupt along with the ADF version that also was corrupt, and by the third play through on another version that also turned out to be corrupt... well, I figured it is probably going to take me years to get through the game at this rate so I better start writing a review!



Like all good adventures, you have to start somewhere and here we are at the start of our hero's adventure. Looks like a nice and cosy place!

The first time I played Cadaver many many years ago I was impressed with how it looked and I really liked it, but I had no patients or understanding of the game and would only ever play it for about 10 minutes making it through a fraction of the first dungeon section before giving up. Much to my surprise though loading this little gem up again proved to be quite a good choice as I soon found myself quite addicted and enjoying my self... until the whole corrupt disk / file thing.

Opening on a simple parchment scroll explaining who you are and how you ended up in the depths of a dungeon, this is all nicely presented with some moody music and simple but pleasant presentation. There is some meat to the story, however, to be honest it pretty much boils down to you are looking for riches beyond your dreams and you need to find your way out while looking for treasure. Starting the game you find yourself next to your trusty boat deep in a dungeon with an empty inventory and a thirst for adventure. Cadaver can be best described as an isometric action adventure with elements of RPG thrown in for good measure. As you walk around you will find many objects scattered around from rocks to throw at enemies, to magical spells to kill your enemies or protect yourself. The style of game is a tried and true concept of bring item 'A' here to receive item 'B', or combine an item with another item to reveal something else or a hidden passage / secret area. Pretty standard stuff!

However, where other games will have you chatting away with other characters that will mention they have a map, but they have a back ache and ...oh... hey... what do you know, you found some back ache ointment before which you give him and before you can say cliché with a cherry on top you are soon holding the very map you needed.. not in Cadaver. It does have some moments like this, but most of the time you will be finding little scraps of paper scattered around with cryptic clues letting you know where something is hidden or what you must bring to particular area to proceed. At first I found this a little off putting, but soon grew to like this approach with a feeling of satisfaction when I worked each one out. If there was one issue with this though is sometimes these clues can be a little vague and can result in some aimless roaming around. Because of the open style of the game where you can complete some tasks in different orders it is sometimes not clear enough what the goal is or what it is that you should be doing exactly, and while I know this is the style of the game it can be a little frustrating at times.



Time to get some marsh mellows out to toast on the open flames...



A map of your surroundings... even with this I am still lost some how!

So there is the adventure, what about the action? Don't worry, there are plenty of nasty creatures and traps that you will need to deal with. This is probably the weaker section of the game though because due to the isometric nature and control method, dealing with even the most simple enemies can sometimes be more difficult than it should be. Also very disappointing is you do not have any kind of weapon to start with until you find some throwing rocks which are effective but not great, so you can imagine my disappointment when I finally found some armour and a sword that it is completely useless going straight to my inventory and unable to arm it! You can throw it at you enemies and that is it! I was expecting I could change into some more robust armour and helmets, while holding a shield and wielding a kick ass knights sword... but sadly no, back to throwing your pebbles. Magic spells are good, but limited supply means you really have to save them up which is not easy with limited slots in your inventory (yes... pieces of paper take up sooooo much room!) It certainly is not a deal breaker, but I feel its an area sadly overlooked which could have offered so much more.



Somebody get this man a chicken nugget already, a man's got to eat!



Somebody get this man a chicken nugget as well... oh... wait.. hmm....



Awww, somebodies cute little pet dragon spitting fire at me.



Its never a good sign when there is blood on the floor like this...



Nasty ugly creatures, thanks but I am just fine standing up here!

Presentation in this game truly shines in a style that is very Bitmap Brothers, with a wonderful isometric view that manages to never feel repetitive or dull. The game is presented in a static room by room style with sparse animation, but enemies that do appear have some nice animation and detail with everything moving around the screen nice and smooth. Sometimes it is hard to see smaller objects on the floor for you to pick up, but neatly when your character walks into them they slide along the floor which helps pick them out. One odd design choice though is you can also push these objects into the depths of water or even throw them (which at one point is actually required), but this can result in loosing key items you need, or not realising you push an item behind part of the location so you can never find it wasting much time trying to work out what to do next. Also your character has an odd way of moving around almost like he is on roller skates. Despite these oddities the game is still wonderful to gaze upon with each area as you progress looking vastly different in look and feel giving a great feeling of progression as you advance through the game. Sound though... well, there is a distinct lack of. It is a very quiet game, with the odd sound effect that sounds good, but very limited... not much else to write home about really.

If you like a good action adventure game that involves a bit of exploration and thought, then I urge you to check Cadaver out. Its not perfect, it has its little quirky faults, but for everything that is not quite right it makes up for and more with what it does right.



So I am guessing the blood used to draw the star on the wall once belonged to this poor chap! I guess its good to see it not go to waste, although I hope he was not alive at the time!

Cadaver

A500 - 1990

GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	50%
GAMEPLAY	74%

Ambitious game that attempts to pull together different genres and it almost pulls it off, but is not without its faults. Beautifully presented in a massive adventure, a must experience for all action adventure fans!

SCORE	76%

The Settlers

- BLUE BYTE
- 1993
- A500

880 GOLD!

Back in ye-olde days when men were real men, women had real men moustaches, and little kids mined for coal like real men! Yep, those were the good old days in the years of early settlements as knights in shining armour fought to control the lands and open sewers ran down the streets followed closely by the black plague... but not in The Settlers! Here the sun always shines, the grass is always lush and green and everyone goes about their cute daily life in cute cottages even as cute and comical knights battle around them burning buildings down. Beneath its cute exterior though lies a very serious and in-depth real time strategy game where you build your settlements up from small villages to bustling medieval cities as you fight rival lords for complete control of each map.

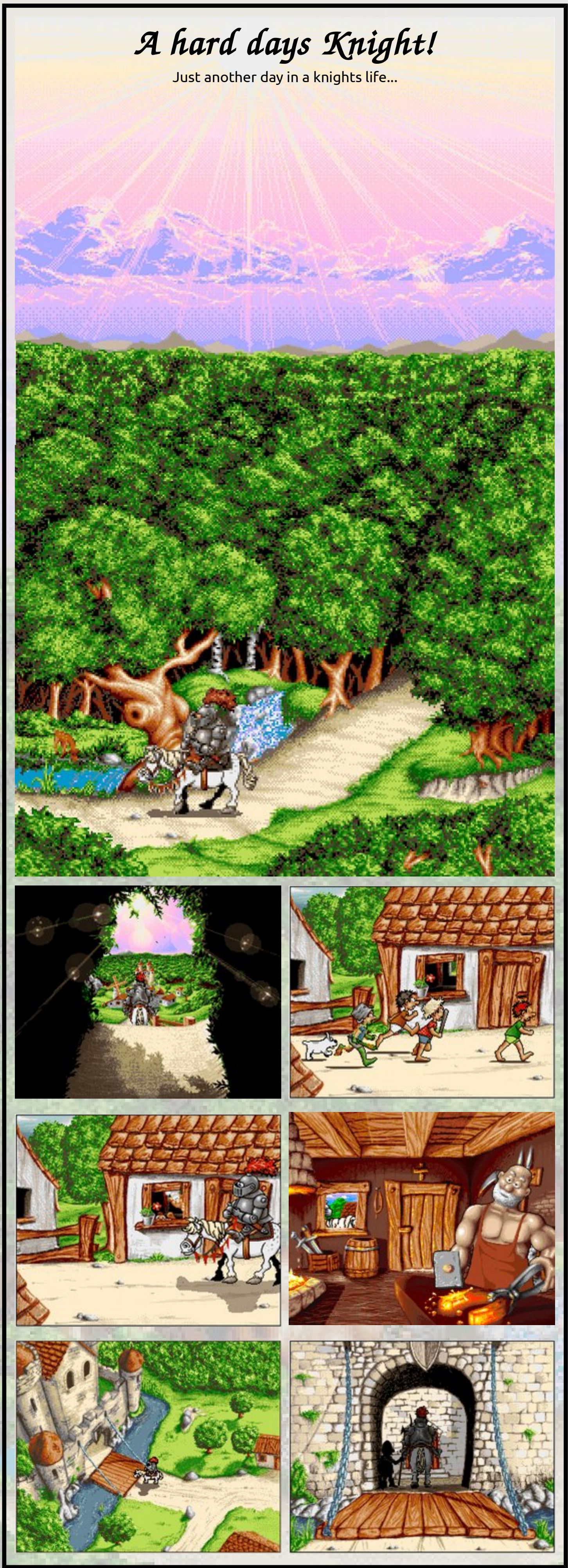

Just another perfect day in our beautiful little villages. Even the pig that is about to be turned into sweet smoked bacon is happy.

What you will notice about Settlers right from the start is just how wonderful it looks. From the beautifully animated introduction watching as you comical night rides his trusty steed through a wonderful little village, you move into the game itself and unlike some games where the introduction is amazing but never looks like the actual game (I'm looking at you Psygnosis!), you will find Settlers looks just as amazing in game with the village from the introduction simply miniaturised while still keeping all of the charm and detail complete with their unique residents. Each level starts on an expansive map complete with forests, mountains, lakes and deserts with wide open green pastures with your first task to select where you will establish your castle (home base). You want to find a spot that will provide plenty of resources such as trees for wood and rocks for building. Once established, you must quickly start building up your town adding things like woodcutters, farms, bakers and blacksmiths, to miners to mine precious metals and coal from the mountains. Everyone has a purpose in the game and for one to succeed you must have everyone else in place, such as you will need a farm to grow wheat which then is sent to the mill to make flour, from there its is off to the baker to make the bread and finally the bread is given to the miner's who will mines the coal. The coal is then sent to the blacksmith who.... well... you get the idea. Ultimately this all works towards one key goal and that is to build and strengthen your army of medieval nights to ward of any rival settlement attacks and ultimately wage war on your opponents to gain control of their land and win the war.


Grow the wheat, to make the flour, used to bake the bread, to feed the miners..



Now here is a bunch of bad to the bone highly trained killing machines!



Your knights will be soft and inexperienced at first but over time will become hardened killing machines after you have them trained and give them gold to protect with their lives. The actual battles are something of an oddity and quite comical, if not slightly annoying the first time you choose to battle an opponents outpost. Instead of everyone charging in at once it is a very organised affair with one of you knights walking up to your opponents building and literally knocking on the door for one of their Knights to come out and greet you. From there each Knight takes its turn swinging their swords at each other landing different blows or misses, and is more like a game of rocks, paper scissors than a battle. If their Knight wins your next Knight will walk up to take the challenge, and if you win then their next Knight will walk out to take his turn until there are no Knights left, upon which if you win you gain control of their outpost adding land to your territory and burning any of their surrounding buildings in the process which is very satisfying. As you can imagine this can be a very lengthy process, especially for large battles and so you will often target many buildings at the same time and promptly walk off and make a coffee.

Be prepared to make many coffees (or tea) while playing this game. Each level can literally take tens of hours to complete, especially if you do not get off to a great start and the enemy knocks you around a little requiring you to rebuild and fight back, but the satisfaction you get when you finally make it all the way through to an enemies castle and watching it burn to the ground after a long and bloody battle is truly unmatched! When I say blood though, there actually isn't any. As mentioned this is a cute looking game which oozes charm not found in most games which is one of its greatest appeals. Even on an A500 it is amazing just how much detail is crammed into this game as your little villagers go out their daily life cutting trees, fishing, baking, building... everyone has their role to play and unique character which they manage to convey even with their small size. Everything moves and is animated wonderfully even down to the trees rustling in the wind. I cannot praise this game enough and it has to be played to be truly appreciated. Sound is just as wonderful with every action on screen resulting in its own unique sound, and if you have more memory you will hear more sounds up to the point where you will have included background music which is actually quite pleasant and not to repetitive which is important in a long drawn out game like this. The attention to detail is unmatched on any other Amiga RTS game.



The desert... unchanged for millions of years, yet witness to a biblical prophesy come true, that someday the .... wait, wrong game...



The coal is connected to the.. iron bars. The iron bars connected to the.. blacksmith. The black smiths connected to the.. pick axe. The....



I call this blue steel! Derek Zoolander would be so proud!

A lot of praise here and rightly so, but surely there are some issues? Well, a couple come to mind and while they do not detract from the game overall, it would have been nice to have seen a couple of minor changes and additions. Firstly, right from the first level you are free to build all of the buildings available in the game which is not so bad in itself, but like games of today it would have been cool if the earlier missions were more like tutorial missions only allowing you to build selected buildings at first to not only better your understanding of each, but to also give you a sense of progression and eagerness to progress through each level to see what else there is to discover. As it is, everything is available right from the start and honestly once you have played the first level there is not a lot else to discover. Secondly, as great and wondrous as the graphics are, again once you have completed the first level their is nothing new to discover as the landscape never changes. Sure there are literally endless amounts of maps to explore, but they always look the same and there is no change to the seasons or environment. Because of these two minor points, the game feels a little like ground hog day each time you start a new level, and while that feeling is short lived as you get engrossed in building up your next settlement, it would have been nice to see a little more variety included.

Settlers is one of the best games the Amiga has to offer and truly a game ahead of its time. With today's mobile markets be it Apple or Google, you will find mountains of free to play strategy games that combine the same use of cute and fun graphic style wrapped around a detailed and robust RTS game. At the time it was not really common for an approach like this, but Settlers is a perfect example of how to do it right and it remains even today one of the most enjoyable and challenging strategy games on any platform. So go make yourself a very large beverage of your liking, start soaking up The Settlers amazing atmosphere and be prepared to loose endless hours and sleep as you battle your way through this epic masterpiece.



I love the smell of napalm in the morning...

The Settlers

A500 - 1993

GOLD!

GRAPHICS	98%
SOUND	96%
GAMEPLAY	98%

Even today this stands as one of the best examples of its genre. With great playability matched by its presentation, this would have to be one of the best games ever released on the Amiga. Amazing!

SCORE 98%

POPULOUS

ELECTRONIC ARTS – 1989 - A500

Keeping with our isometric theme, it's hard to not include the one game that will satisfy anyone's desire to play god and treat humans like Ant's to traumatise and torture. The only thing that is missing is the magnifying glass option to focus the suns rays on them burning all to a crisp in a puff of smoke. Fear not though as there are plenty of other acts of god at your finger tips such as commanding the earth to thrust up in mountains and earthquakes, to floods and quicksand to swallow people into the depths of hell.

Starting with only a single person it is up to you to help shape the lands smoothing out the earth so your people can build and expand ever increasing their population and strength. You do this with a simple mouse control where a left click over the ground will lift it higher, while right clicking will lower all the way until there is only ocean, although unless you plan on drowning your worshippers its probably a good idea to keep things above sea level. Meanwhile across the other side of the world another god is doing the same nurturing his people and building them up to the inevitable war. To hamper each other you can throw all kinds of natural disasters at each other as your powers increase, which will slow down population growth and ultimately make you weaker. Knights can be created to send into battle destroying your opponents, and if you feel confident you are the strongest you can choose a final battle to the death where all of the population from both sides are plunged into a battle to the death with the last man standing the victor.

Populous looks a little dated today with a style where we were moving from 8bit gaming still, looking good but still simplistic in detail. There is a neat expansion for the game called 'The Promised Lands' which adds even more variety to the game with new and strange worlds, one of my favourites been the lego world level complete with your little lego people running around. What really adds to the atmosphere in Populous though is the background ambience with a heart beat slowly beating in deep thumping sounds building in speed as the action builds, while unusual almost orchestral chords play randomly on a backing of thunder crashing and wind howling. Its kind of eerie sounding and very unusual, yet brilliant in execution at the same time keeping you on edge while it builds tension and atmosphere. Brilliant!

Populous has a good pace where games are long but not drawn out allowing you to complete each level in a single sitting so it is a good game where you can jump in when ever you have some time free and play god with your minions. It is an unusual game with some unique qualities which I highly recommend to anyone who suffers from having a god like complex. Now if you will excuse me, I need to go and commit more acts of god that are not covered by your insurance policies. HAAA HAA HAAR! I AM GOD! BOW TO YOUR LEADER AND WORSHIP ME! ... ***ahem*...**









Populous

A500 - 1989

GRAPHICS	60%
SOUND	69%
GAMEPLAY	85%

While it shows its age now, its still a very original and fun game

SCORE	72%

ACID SOFTWARE - 1998 - A500-A1200 CDROM

SuperSkidmarks 2+

Skidmarks.... fun childish schoolboy humour springs to mind, but this is a very appropriate name for this little racer as your car will leave skid marks on every turn as you burn around each banger of a race track (optional for your underwear depending on how intense your racing is!). There are so many versions of this game from the original Skidmarks, to Skidmarks 2, Super Skidmarks, Silly Skidmarks, Ultimate Super Skidmarks to even Super Skidmarks Farm Yard Edition (yes..Farm Yard Edition..racing cows!), but through each game you will find tracks and cars from the originals and each subsequent release was more like an expansion than a whole new game, so I have decided to go with the "PLUS" CD edition.

I have a love hate relationship with Skidmarks (mostly after version 1). I have a soft spot for top down racers, especially those viewed on an angle like Skidmarks. Get used to the games handling and speed nailing every power-slide and hairpin turn, and there is no denying Skidmarks is a truly solid and fun arcade racer. But the whole game is then wrapped in this uninspiring and frankly boring menu system that saps the fun right out of the game. Version 1 had some arcade style menus but the version played here (along with all others after the first instalment) have this workbench style menu, with loading and results presented in the same way. It feels like a developer version, or a PD game and not a full retail polished game like others. I would have loved a super slick main menu with quality music and presentation between races, with an option if I wanted to create my own races and play around with setting to then enter this kind of menu screen.

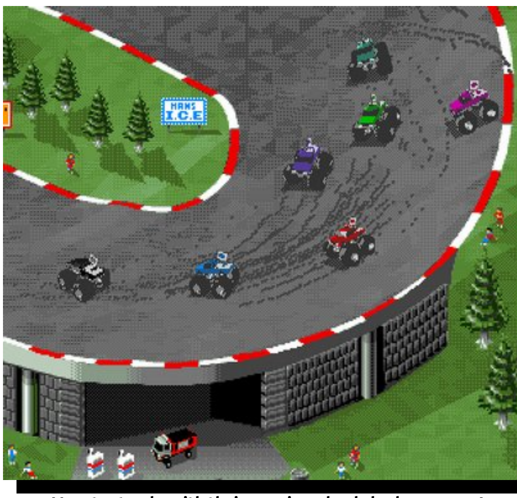
There feels like a million cars to choose from in this game, and with the right rendering software you can even create your own. While fairly small and looking like they are only drawn in 4 colours, where these guys excel is they are made up of endless frames of animations meaning not only do they turn smoothly in full 360, but they turn just as smooth in every angle of the track so bouncing over bumps and riding up steep embankments around corners will see your beast machine match perfectly giving a real sense of connection between the car and the track. This real sense does not convey to the grip on your tires though as it feels like someone has smeared triple cream butter all over them leaving you to slip and slide your way around. At first this feels a little annoying as you don't feel like you have control, but then you start to learn that direction is not so much controlled by turning in perfectly aiming for the apex and easing the throttle on as you exit. No... its a Jeremy Clarkson version of handling where its all about POOOWWWEEEERRR! Start turning well before a corner with your pedal to the metal and if you get it right you will pull off the most amazing power slide that would impress even seasoned D1 drifters! Its at this point when you stop bouncing off walls and perfectly drifting through every corner that your frustration turns to satisfaction and fun.



All lined up ready to race! The uneven track surface here makes for some interesting handling. Pretty much like any dirt road here in Australia!



As you pass players or from time to time it will remind you what place you are in. It likes to really rub it in though by not showing 8th, but instead LAST.. like I am here!


Monster trucks with their massive wheels look awesome!



You can select Hi Res mode which will switch the game into hi resolution allowing you to see much more of the track. This does give a strange stripe effect to the cars though.



Here is the in game menu's for you to gaze in all their glory! This might have been fine in 1988, but 1998? Just feels clinical and boring, unlike the game itself.



Yes, to your left here you will find one of many strange 'vehicles' to race in. This would be the racing cows.... cows with wheels strapped to their feet. I guess with their origins in New Zealand where sheep rule, this seemed logical...

Minis, drag cars, monster trucks, stock racing cars, the list goes on. Want to hook up a caravan to those cars for some caravan racing, sure thing! Cows, push bikes, the star ship enterprise... now its just getting stupid. While some of these 'vehicles' are just stupid and you might only try once, you can't complain about not having variety, even if some are completely pointless. Race tracks are also plentiful and varied from flat bitumen circuit racers to monster truck style dirt tracks with big air, there is bound to be something for everyone. The presentation of the tracks is simple in its own style, and while it feels a little amateur in detail and style, the sheer number of tracks, variety and size of each more than makes up for this.. and above all else it runs Super Silky Smooth (I am surprised there is not a version called this!). Its like one of those toddler race car books where it looks simple with little people everywhere, but in the end it manages to feel fun.

Now lets talk about sound... there is an annoying engine sound, some skid sound effects, and a not so memorable menu music. No in game music, no large cheering crowds... very minimal and very disappointing. They do their job and little else. So where does this leave skidmarks? Should you play it? Well... yes! At its heart you can feel the passion and enthusiasm that has gone into this game and the core game is solid and extremely fun which in the end is the most important part. It is one of my favourite racing games on the Amiga. Its just... I cant think how to say this... its just... everything else around that wonderful game... the music, the menus, the loading screens, the sound effects... everything else sucks. It does have a neat game of pong on the menu screen using a spinning Acid logo if you have two players though... got to give it 1% more for that! And it is called Skidmarks... ***snigger***... 1% more for that too!

Super Skidmarks 2+

A500-A1200 CD - 1998

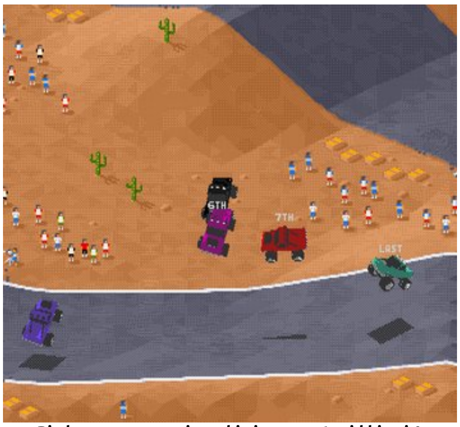
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	35%
GAMEPLAY	93%

Average presentation with very poor audio, hides one of the best top down racers on the Amiga. Its just a lot of fun!

SCORE	82%



I hope the rating of this game included drug references. There are a lot of signs advertising acid!!



Big bouncy suspension + big jumps = stupid big air!

>>ISO – MIA<<

Of course there are a lot more great isometric games out there on the Commodore beast of yesteryear, but only so many pages in this great Mag (actually, more like there is a Christmas deadline to meet!). Some of these we have already reviewed, others I am sure will appear in future issues, but just for a bit of filler since the folks at 880 Gamer are to busy getting tipsy at Xmas parties, lets have a quick look at some reheated reviews and other games that love to get all angled **

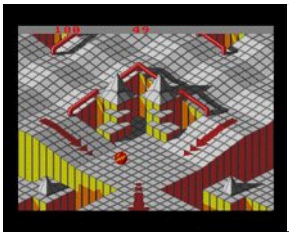
****Obviously this is only a few as its hard to write a lot with a Christmas party hangover!**



HERO'S QUEST

Based on the popular board game, this turn based computer adaptation proved to be some fun for a short time, if not a little repetitive and dull after a while. A wonderful introduction and a very memorable backing tune makes for a worthy mention alone





MARBLE MADNESS (Issue 4 – 75%)

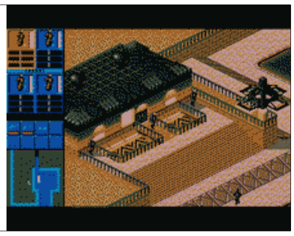
A big star in our 'balls' issue, allowing for you and a friend to play with your balls together, this light hearted classic is a must play for everyone who loves unique and fun games. Its simple idea of controlling your marble as it rolls down unique tracks is great!

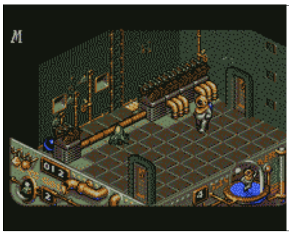




SYNDICATE

Combining violence, lots of kick ass guns and mind control allowing you to command hordes of people in mindless death and destruction, all wrapped up in a wonderful blade runner setting. Really... what more could you ever ask for in a game!?!





TREASURE TRAP (Issue 2 – 71%)

Deep sea treasure hunting comes to your living room in this quirky sunken ship exploring game. Explore the hidden secrets and dangers that await you in the bowels of this rusting sea wreck, without the need of a tetanus shot from your doctor!





PAC-MANIA ***

Come on... its Pacman, but in a cool isometric view and 16bit to boot! Can I say anything else? No? OK, time to fill the rest of this box with informative info.. WAKKA WAKKA WAKKA WAKKA WAKKA WAKKA WAKKA..WHEEEP! WOO WOO WOO WOOooooo...



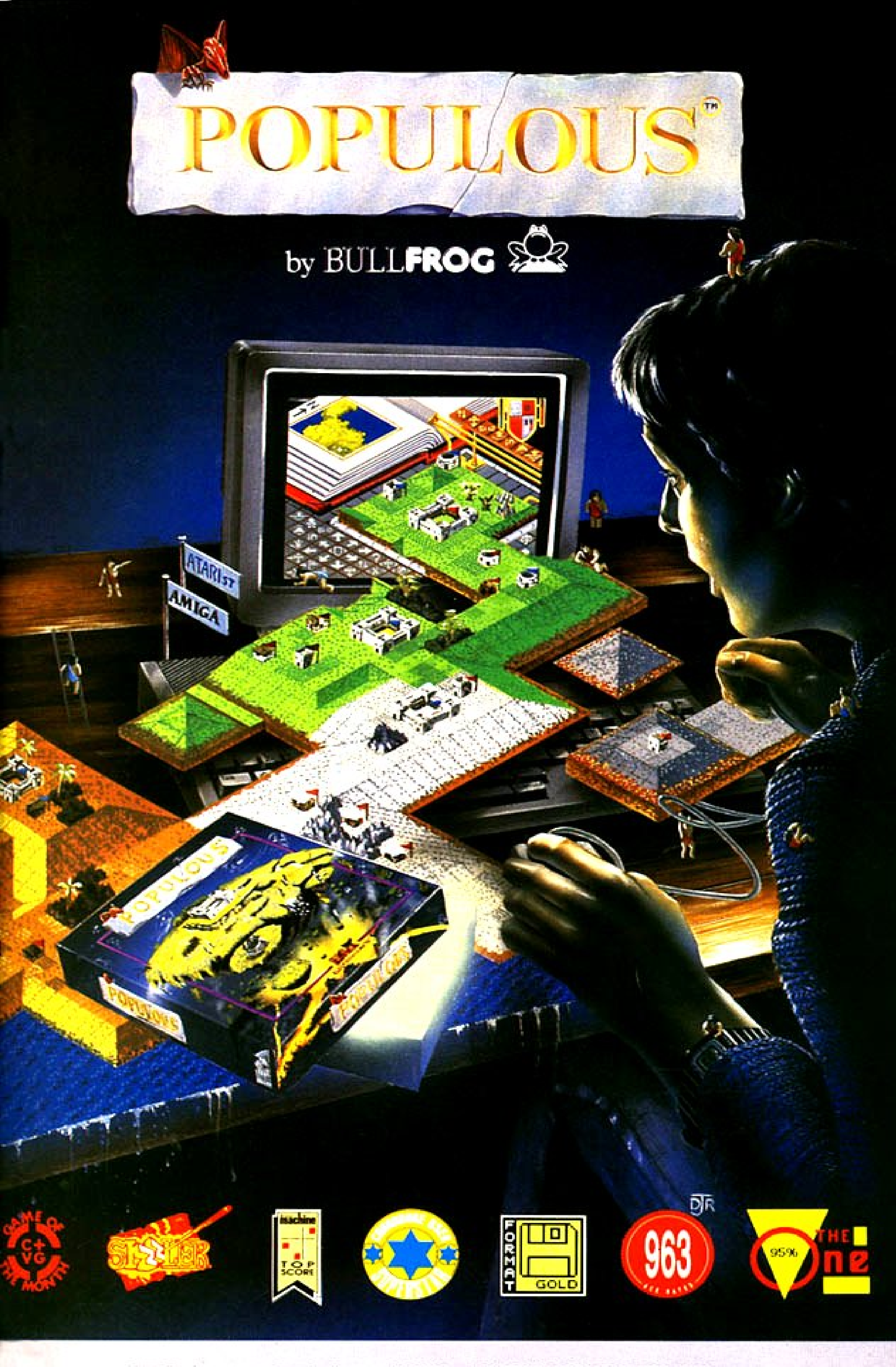


WHIZZ

Looking drop dead gorgeous on the A1200, this fun platformer has all the looks and charm going for it, but as we know looks are not always the guarantee for a great game! So we will let the jury decide when it is reviewed in our next issue of 880 Gamer...

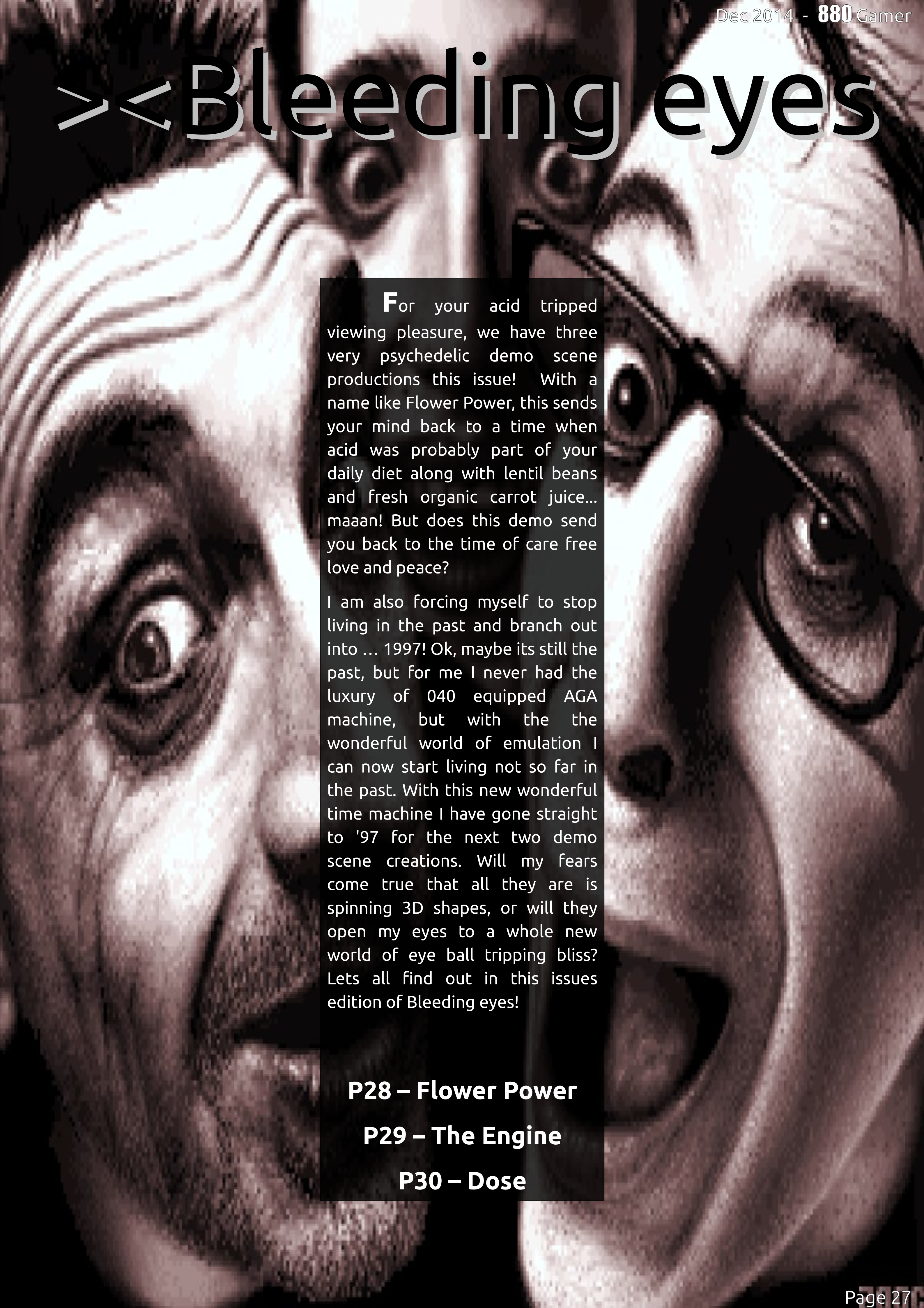


***** More fine print... yes, I know Pac-mania is not technically traditional isometric view... but come on! ITS PACKMAN! How can I not include it! And look at it... it looks fab! End of argument!**



POPULOUS™
by BULLFROG
ATARI ST
AMIGA
POPULOUS
GAME OF THE MONTH C+VG
SIZZLER
machine TOP SCORE
FORMAT GOLD
963
95%
THE One

>< Bleeding eyes



For your acid tripped viewing pleasure, we have three very psychedelic demo scene productions this issue! With a name like Flower Power, this sends your mind back to a time when acid was probably part of your daily diet along with lentil beans and fresh organic carrot juice... maaan! But does this demo send you back to the time of care free love and peace?

I am also forcing myself to stop living in the past and branch out into … 1997! Ok, maybe its still the past, but for me I never had the luxury of 040 equipped AGA machine, but with the the wonderful world of emulation I can now start living not so far in the past. With this new wonderful time machine I have gone straight to '97 for the next two demo scene creations. Will my fears come true that all they are is spinning 3D shapes, or will they open my eyes to a whole new world of eye ball tripping bliss? Lets all find out in this issues edition of Bleeding eyes!

Flower Power

- Anarchy
- 1992
- OCS

With the name Flower Power I had visions of 60's hippy culture psychedelic visuals backed up with some Beatles style music about love and peace, so I was kind of disappointed to find there is nothing in this demo really related to any of these (with the exception of a good mind trip!).

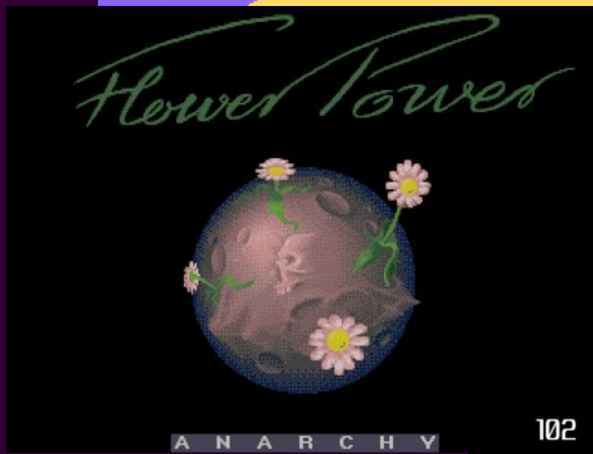
That said, I do like this little demo. It's not the biggest, nor does it have the most amazing effects, but it is very well produced with everything flowing and linking together. Even from the moment it loads this is evident with a little message and loading tune giving way to some moody music / 3D introduction (which dose drag a little and is not that technical). The tune picks up the beat turning into a pretty decent up beat techno remix of the intro as the title zooms onto the screen. This is where I mean it flows nice, as the next section is pretty standard 3D balls, but the way the title morphs into the ball adds to the flow and transitions.

That said, there is not a lot to this demo though, with some nice cube on cube liquid effect, some nice light coloured shapes and a rather cool transparent bouncy ball with stars on it before its all over way to soon. A great touch though is after you think its all over and expect the end scroll text, you are instead treated to a beautiful hi-res fantasy picture with mellow pan flute backing music, and better yet clicking the left mouse zooms the image while keeping in the same circle size the picture is, allowing you to view more detail by moving your mouse around. Its a very neat touch and adds a little bit of interaction that you don't get in a lot of demo's.

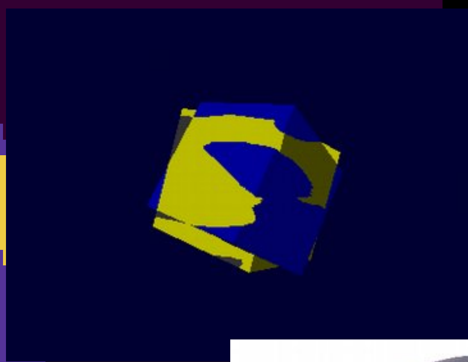
So the verdict? It doesn't have ground breaking effects, and its too short, but what is there is very well presented and flows wonderfully. Plus the music alone is worth your while to check it out. Its not great, but part of me really likes this one. Just don't expect hippies!

71%

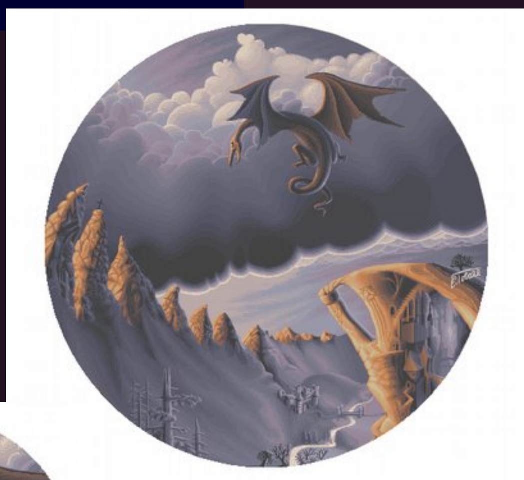




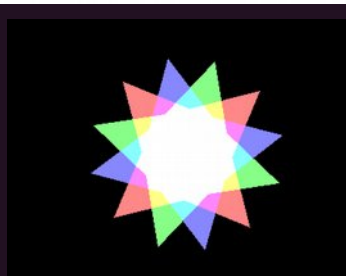




ANARCHY



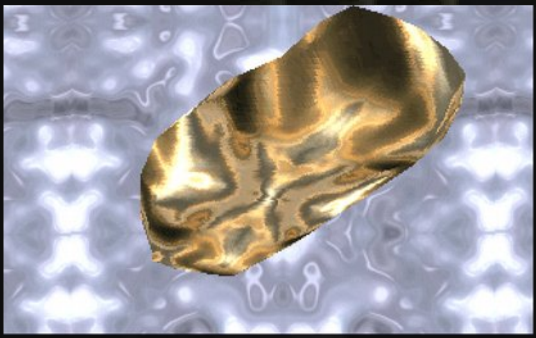


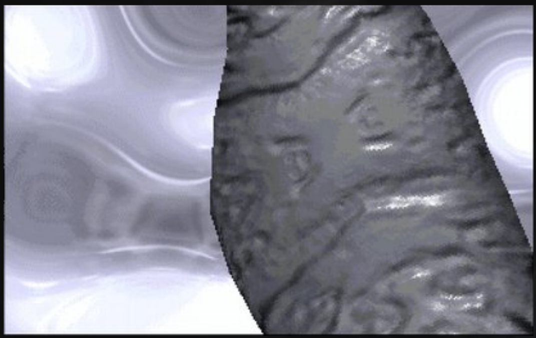


The Engine

Ramses - 1997 - AGA











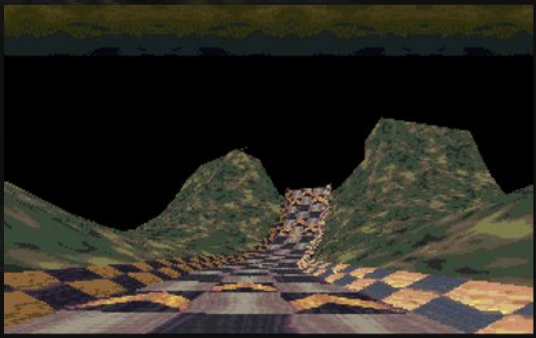
The Engine, or as I would name it... the rock simulator, does not go very far in curbing my fears that a lot of newer demo's concentrate way to much on spinning 3D objects, and indeed The Engine spends most of its time showing us rotating abstract rock like objects made of different materials. Hardly exciting stuff in my book.

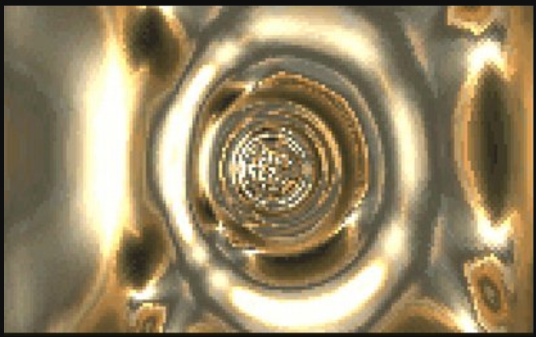
Admittedly there is some impressive light sourcing, shading and bump mapping going on here which gives the objects a good solid feel with nice rounded edges and good differences between materials used, and I can totally appreciate that... its just there is to much time spent on this. One saving grace is a small section devoted to the original WipEout game which gets a thumbs up from me. But its limited and short lived.

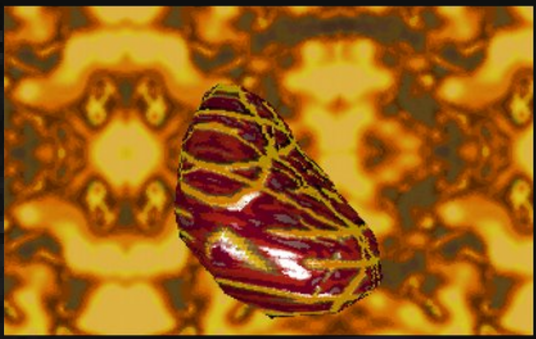
There are a couple other effects such as a nice little tunnel section along with some neat light sourcing in a room, but nothing to get truly excited over. This is tied together (and timed well) with a electronic tune that does the job, but is not very memorable. If you are looking for a decent rock simulator with a bit of WipEout, then look no further!

61%











DOSE

- Mellow Chips
- 1997
- AGA

As the fires boil away with credits that seem to push through the flames before melting away, Dose has a brilliant opening that looks like it comes straight out of a Terminator movie and with an opening sound track that is equally suited. This demo restored my faith that its not going to be all 3D spinning objects, and then when the music starts to up the tempo you are hit with... a 3D spinning object..... ***sigh*** ....

But I cant stay mad at Dose though, because despite this its just so pretty! There is a lot of lighting and blurring effects going on rich with colour, and it does not stick around to long on each keeping some good variety and pace. One of my favourite sections is where a planet floating in the cosmos starts to pulse and stretch as something seems to try and push its way out. Its very cool and kind of organic, almost creepy!

The star of Dose though is the soundtrack accompanying all of this. As mentioned the opening is extremely moody and would not sound out of place in any action movies opening credits, but once you get past this you are treated to an awesome orchestral trance techno track that takes me back to the awesome trance CD's of the time.

This demo restored my faith in this type of production from later years, and while at first I felt it was over a little to soon, any longer would have probably felt drawn out, so really its best how it is. Didn't make my eyes bleed, but certainly soothed my ears!













85%

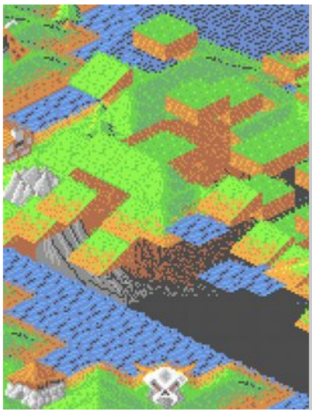


THE SKIES ARE YOUR HUNTING GROUND
F29
RETALIATOR
Take the controls of a plane that even the USAF's top guns won't see until the next century! Eighteen months of painstaking research into two of the USA's most revolutionary Advanced Tactical Fighters now pays off in this ..the ultimate flight simulation. Choose between the Lockheed F22 and the Grumman F29, an array of battle environments and dozens of various tactical missions.
Aerial combat, strategic bombings, interactive ground based battles, seagoing carriers ... the list of features is endless. Real time cockpit displays – including "true radar" enhance the realistic feel of this visually stunning simulation, your mission begins.
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U.S.AIR FORCE
U.S.AIR FORCE
YOUR NERVE
IS YOUR
RETURN FLIGHT
ocean
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Telephone: 061 832 6633
Telex: 669977 OCEANS G · Fax: 061 834 0650

880 cheat!

Tis the season to be cheating... tra la la la laaa...





Populous

Playing god is not always easy. There are people to drown, buildings to burn, and worse yet is that other pesky god causing you headaches. Wouldn't it be nice if you could make his life harder somehow?

Load a conquest game as usual, then click on the game setup icon. Select "Custom Game" and enter the game options and set them as desired. Click on "Evil", then "Two Players", and then cancel your selection. Your opponent will now be unable to alter the landscape and progress in the game.

Desert Strike

War is never easy for anyone, but you cant help but feel let down by your own team relaxing on the beach in this hard as nails game! Stuck on a mission, here... have a free pass to the next mission. In fact, have them all!

Level 2 :

TQJJLOM BQJRAEF EQOLHJR BQQQAEB LQJAQRJ

Level 3 :

TLOHOAN ELEAJLN OLAEAHQ KLJLTOE TLJJOAQ

Level 4 :

OTBWEZT BTEWKLL PEITFTI WEIVVJT WTEOVJP

Level 5 :

TGJZLOK ONKKQKF ITOUPEX EVNFWMB



The Settlers

To complete a single level in this game can take days, and if you loose right at the very last moment after days of preparation your Amiga could become an easy target of aggravated assault. As a service to the community and preservation of all remaining Amiga's world wide, we are pleased to provide you with all the level codes to prevent unwanted violence!

2 – START	3 - STATION
4 – UNITY	5 - WAVE
6 – EXPORT	7 – OPTION
8 – RECORD	9 - SCALE
10 – SIGN	11 - ACRON
12 – CHOPPER	13 - GATE
14 – ISLAND	15 - LEGION
16 – PIECE	17 - RIVAL
18 – SAVAGE	19 - XAVER
20 – BLADE	21 - BEACON
22 – PASTURE	23 - OMNUS
24 – TRIBUTE	25 - FOUNTAIN
26 - CHUDE	



880 talk back!

Rummaging through Santa's mail box we found.....

Don't know if you are aware but I make music via Protracker on my Amiga A1200 & I have done a christmas music disk that has been released, didn't know if you'd like to include it on your christmas issue or not?
Aaron.

Do I ever! Give me give me! Oh... wait... its already on the cover, that was quick! Again, thanks for the contribution, especially well suited for this issue! I used to love playing around with Protracker although I must admit I am pretty rubbish at it! If anyone else has anything they would like included on a cover disk or in the mag, let me know... we pay top monopoly dollars for any free ride to make our job slacker! But you still get all the credit! WIN WIN!

Howdy
In case you haven't got a theme for next issue, maybe a good one would be to review all the ST->Amiga conversions that have been made. They get no reviews due to not being released back in the day, and there's quite a few of them now.
Where Time Stood Still, Super Sprint, Gauntlet, Joust etc. Enduro Racer looks like it'll be out soon.
I'm even in the middle of doing one, Trantor Amiga is not too far away. (I am trying to get the sound effects in at the moment). You could even release it on the coverdisk as a "full game" or something haha :)
Codetapper

Wait a moment, another offer for a cover disk? I feel I will be out of a job soon with all these contributions. I can just sit back and watch the cash flow in... wait... what?! We do this magazine for free? What kind of stupid business model is this?! Still, this sounds interesting. Even I myself do not know a lot about the evil world of ST exclusives, so this could make for some very interesting and new unexplored territory for me! Mummy! I'm scared!

Hello Mark!
Any chance for 880Gamer Christmas 2014 Issue No 5? :) It would be fantastic!
Cheers,
Marcin

Hmmm... let me think about it and I will get back to you. The idea sounds interesting....

Hi Mark

I just wanted to write and say 'thank you' for creating such a cool Amiga magazine. I've really enjoyed the first few issues and look forward to reading more! I love the cheat section and have used some of them. I'll tweet your new issues as and when they're released. I have an Amiga 1200 set up along with a whole host of other computers, as well as my beloved Commodore 64. I run www.c64endings, and I also code crazy hacks of old Commodore64 games. Feel free to view my sites ;-) Keep up the great work! Kind regards and respect,
VinnyMainolfi
www.c64endings.co.uk
www.hackersoft.co.uk

Everyone loves a free plug! Thanks! But seriously guys, if C64 gets your rocks off, you can't go wrong with visiting Vinny's sites. Sweet clean sites full of cool stuff. There was a good chance I would have gone down the C64 path, so I guess in some alternate universe there is a magazine called **170**Gamer! Excuse me a moment, I can hear the universe imploding....

Hi Mark!

Just discovered your magazine, awesome work. As well as being a massive C64 fan, I also have a soft spot for the Amiga too..Anyway, I'm busy working away at Reset #05, since our magazines are 'cousins', perhaps one day in the future we can do some sort of cross-feature!

Keep up the great work!
Kevin (Unkle K/Reset Magazine)
http://reset.cbm8bit.com/

Now this is cool! Both of our magazines are up to issue 5, and both based on Commodore beasts! Its almost like rival magazines in the past. You are my arch nemesis, and I yours!...=)
Seriously though, you have a pretty decent mag over there full of a lot of interesting and meaningful stuff, unlike here where we just dribble about only games and trip out watching scene demo's! I like the idea of the cross feature though, maybe something like a 'versus' feature where we have games reviewed for both the C64 and Amiga, while giving each other a hard time and arguing about which version is best! Sounds like good clean mud slinging fun! Although release dates for 880 Gamer are pretty random at best... Keep up the great work Unkle K!

Remember, feel free to drop us a quick email at :
880Gamer@gmail.com
Thanks to everyone for your comments and support!

>>next issue

We go in search of the real street fighter! Does such a thing exist on the Amiga?



Now... lets remember the moves...

Quarter circle medium punch for fireball...

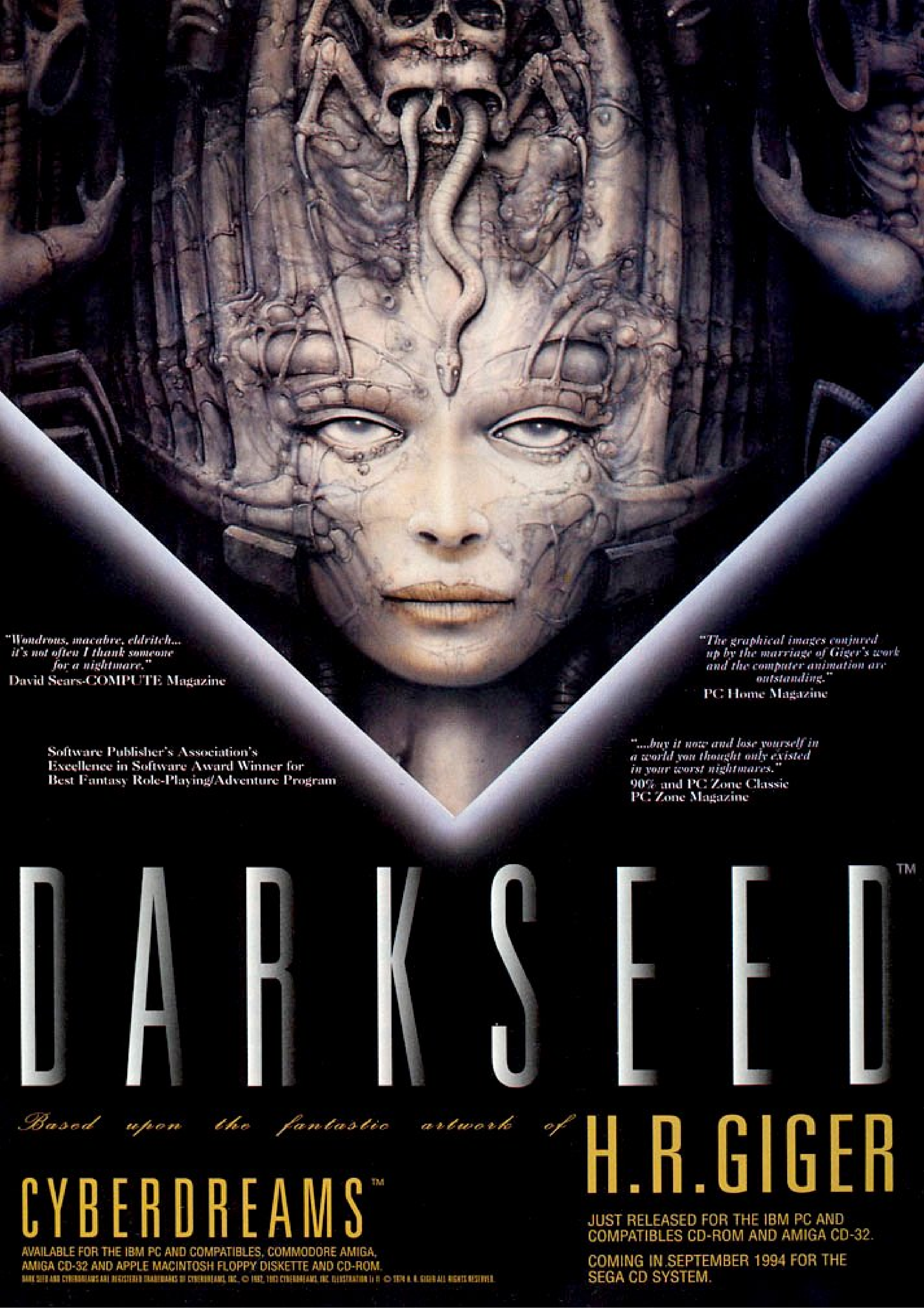
Wait... only one button... how do I punch and kick?!?!... oooohhh boy!

What have I got myself into.....

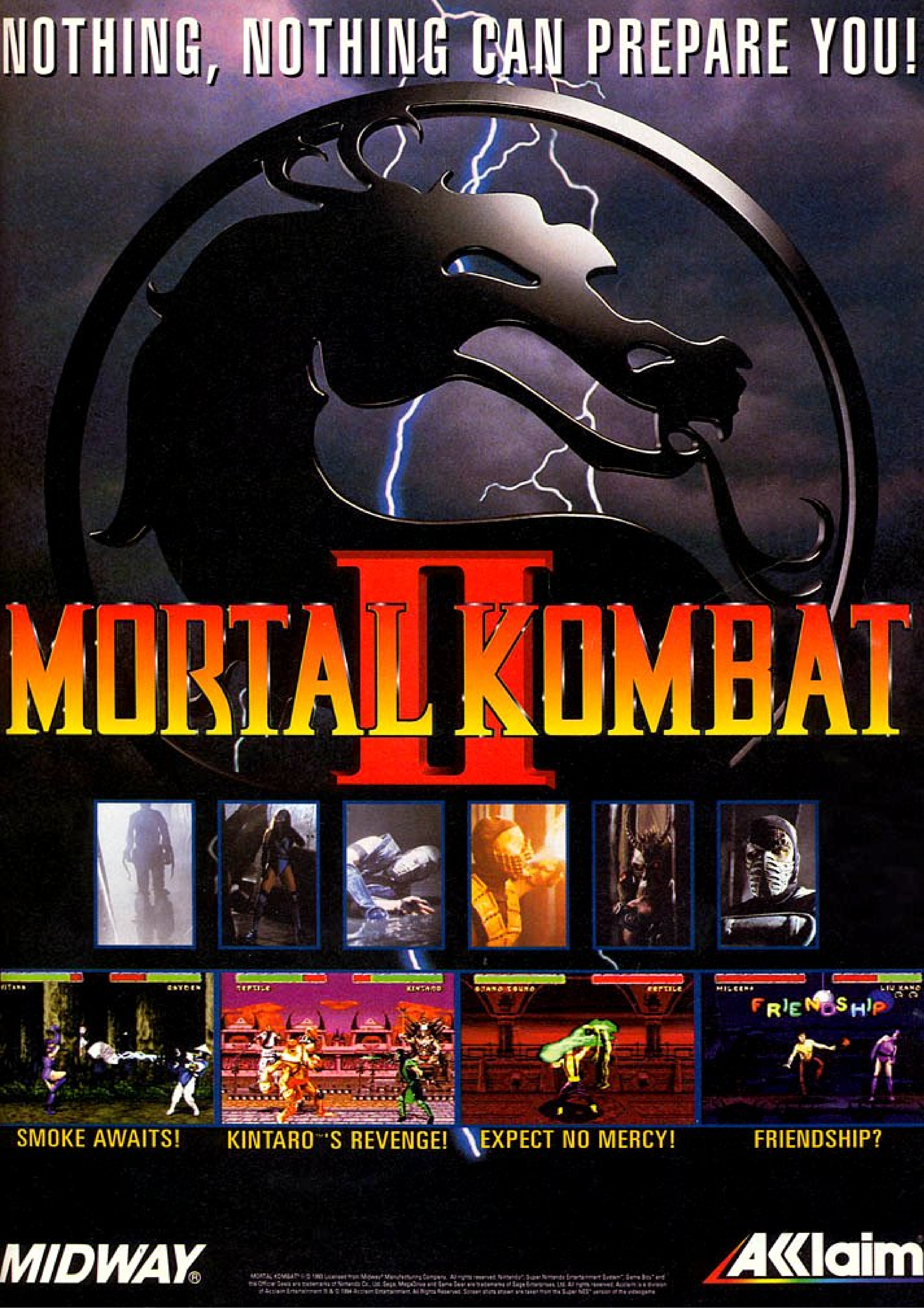
The scrolly text shout out bit...

I would like to acknowledge the following people / groups / software / sites for making 880 Gamer possible, and wish them a merry Christmas :

Ubuntu – 880 and emulation is run on Ubuntu, along with use of the Ubuntu font used within 880 Gamer
FS-UAE – A big thanks to Frode Solheim and the UAE team for bringing great Amiga emulation to Ubuntu
WHDLoad - Bert Jahn's masterpiece, making disk swap-less dreams come true
The GIMP / Fotowall – All image manipulation powered by the gimp and his full leather suit, with awesome help also from Fotowall!
LibreOffice – 880 is fully written up and saved in PDF using LibreOffice Writer .. and its free just like 880 Gamer!
Lemon Amiga – Thanks for their wonderful website where some information is gathered.
EAB – For helping spread the word of 880 Magazine, and for good sport in the game comp. Bring it!
ADA – Both to the Amiga Demo Archive site and all of those that keep the scene alive and pumping to this day!
HOL / Amiga Magazine Rack– Some Cover disk ADF files and information gathered from these wonderful sites
RETRO ASYLUM – For providing this months awesome demo disk with Christmas-tastic rocking tunes! Fits in perfect this issue!
The Amiga – An eternal thanks to Jay Miner and the amazing Amiga team that built this great machine
EVERYONE! - You guys ROCK! No... I mean it, you really are a great bunch of Amiga fanatic crazy folk just like me, and that's just great!!!
Thanks to you guys we are now up to issue 5 and counting! I never thought we would ever get this far, and its all thanks to you!
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL FOR 2015!



"Wondrous, macabre, eldritch... it's not often I thank someone for a nightmare."
David Sears-COMPUTE Magazine
"The graphical images conjured up by the marriage of Giger's work and the computer animation are outstanding."
PC Home Magazine
Software Publisher's Association's Excellence in Software Award Winner for Best Fantasy Role-Playing/Adventure Program
"....buy it now and lose yourself in a world you thought only existed in your worst nightmares."
90% and PC Zone Classic
PC Zone Magazine
DARKSEED™
Based upon the fantastic artwork of H.R.GIGER
CYBERDREAMS™
AVAILABLE FOR THE IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES, COMMODORE AMIGA, AMIGA CD-32 AND APPLE MACINTOSH FLOPPY DISKETTE AND CD-ROM.
JUST RELEASED FOR THE IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES CD-ROM AND AMIGA CD-32.
COMING IN SEPTEMBER 1994 FOR THE SEGA CD SYSTEM.


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